



Department of Defence

2026 Graduate Program Group Activity Candidate Materials

Group Activity

For this activity, please imagine that you are currently employed in the Defence Graduate Program. The Department of Defence is running its annual innovation challenge for graduate and entry level participants. As part of this challenge, you are assigned to a group project to demonstrate your ability to analyse and interpret information, work together in a team and present your ideas in a clear and impactful way.

As part of this project, you are required to review the background and factsheet provided below, and as a group work together to design a new scheme/initiative to support the main goals of increasing awareness of upcoming changes for ADF reservists and influencing and supporting reservist recruitment and retention efforts. You will also be required to plan a recruitment and attraction event and develop a social media campaign to provide information on the outcome of the ADF Strategic Review.

While there is no need to provide any detailed budgeting or resourcing plans, you are expected to provide justification for your decisions to support your ideas.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is responsible for defending Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity. ADF Reservists are a crucial component of the ADF, providing essential support and capability alongside full-time ADF counterparts, contributing to national security and community assistance.

In December 2024, a strategic review of the ADF Reserves was published, identifying recommendations to improve integration of reservists into the rest of the Australian workforce. This includes the overall goal of supporting the ADF's transition to a more integrated and focused workforce to meet the demands of Australia's strategic circumstances. To implement this recommendation, Defence needs to adapt the structure and role of the reserves to complement the rest of the ADF and allow reservists to deliver operational capability, depth, and critical skills. These recommendations are expected to be implemented in 2025.

Previous and current schemes

To assist you in this activity, below you will find some previous and current schemes designed to support the recruitment and retention of ADF members. Beyond the large-scale schemes and programs, Defence periodically introduces other initiatives to promote and enhance reserve service. Examples of these initiatives are detailed below:

Reserve Ready Scheme

In 1991, the ADF developed the 'Reserve Ready Scheme' which was aimed to improve the ADF's operational readiness and capability. The program was designed to create a pool of trained and experienced reservists, who could be quickly mobilised during times of need. The program requirements involved 12 months of full-time service, followed by a four-year part-time contract. Due to its substantial cost, the scheme ended following the 1996 Federal Election.

Gap Year

The ADF Gap Year is a current Defence program available for young Australians aged between 17 and 24 year olds, who are interested in experiencing the Navy, Army or Air Force without making a long-term commitment to the ADF. This program presents a unique opportunity for participants, allowing them to get a feel for a career in the ADF and providing accelerated training opportunities to encourage participants to transition to continued service. The ADF Gap Year program does not require any minimum period of service and participants are not required to transition to continued service upon completion of the program.

ServeOn Campaign

The ServeOn campaign is aimed at current full-time Army members, allowing them an opportunity to transition to a part-time capacity to support flexible service options, including spending more time with family, pursuing a civilian career or simply changing pace. This campaign allows individual needs to be met while recognising transferrable skills between civilian and military employment now and in the future. Participants can readily transfer between these patterns of service throughout their career.

One Army Potential

The One Army Potential is a two-way marketplace that allows the Army to identify candidates with specific skillsets required for roles through skills mapping. It also allows reservists to find jobs that let them serve in the way they want, when they want.

Civil Qualifications Recognition

The Civil Qualifications Recognition initiative allows some civil qualifications to be recorded in the internal system for ADF members. Civil qualifications that can be recorded range from Diplomas to Doctoral degrees. This allows ADF to leverage a reservists' civil skills more quickly and easily when they're required.

STRENGTHENING THE ADF RESERVE

Strategic Review of the ADF Reserves

The Strategic Review of the ADF Reserves (Reserve Review) was a recommendation of the Defence Strategic Review. The Reserve Review identifies recommendations to improve integration of reservists into the total workforce, recognising the critical enabling role reservists have in delivering operational capability, depth and critical skills to Defence.

ADF Reservists providing service represent 33% of the total ADF workforce.



Recommendations:

- ▶ Establish an ADF Reserve Force Framework to support improved categorisation and management of reserve capacity and capability.
- ▶ Evolve the ADF workforce management system to support an integrated reserve and permanent workforce.
- ▶ Improve conditions of service offerings for reserve personnel.
- ▶ Improve recruitment and retention of ADF reservists through:
 - ▶ Establishing up to 1,000 additional reserve positions by 2030.
 - ▶ Creating direct entry pathways to reserve service in Navy, Air Force and Cyber domain.
 - ▶ Accelerated reserve entry pathways and broader specialist pathways across all Services, Cyber and Space domains.
 - ▶ Extending active commitment and management opportunities for former ADF members.
 - ▶ Generating partnerships with industry to access and share talent.
- ▶ Adjust training courses to accelerate and improve throughput of reserve trainees across the ADF.

The ADF Reserve:

- ▶ Deliver critical domestically focused operational capability.
- ▶ Reinforce capacity in support of offshore capability.
- ▶ Offset workforce shortages in specialist roles.
- ▶ Provide surge capacity across all five domains including cyber and space.

Defence will begin implementation of the recommendations in 2025, including:

- ▶ Development of a specialised cyber Reserve workforce to support delivery of domain capabilities.
- ▶ Collaborating closely with other government departments, industry and academia to optimise the identification of and access to talent.
- ▶ Improved connections to support shared capacity of a skilled workforce, such as health and logistics specialists.
- ▶ Improved recruitment and retention of ADF reservists through:
 - ▶ Establishing up to 1,000 additional reserve personnel by 2030.

Benefits of Reserve Service include:

- ▶ Tax-free pay.
- ▶ Subsidised health and education.
- ▶ Enhanced opportunities to develop existing civil and military skills to support ongoing career development in and beyond service.



Figure above: Factsheet: Strategic Review of the ADF Reserves

Task

For this activity, please imagine that you have joined a working group as part of the program. Your group's primary goal is to raise public awareness of the changes to ADF Reserves in the coming year. The secondary goal of the group is to support the recruitment and retention of reservists.

The working group has been tasked with researching ideas and developing plans on **three (3) specific areas** that could have an impact to the ADF reserve projects currently underway. The areas are to develop a new initiative, plan a social media campaign and organise an event, these areas will be outlined in more detail below.

Your working group will meet with your Director and Assistant Director in **two (2) hours** to present your plans.

Please note that while there is no need to provide any detailed budgeting or resourcing plans, you are expected to provide justification for your decisions to support your ideas.

New Initiative

Your team is tasked with developing an idea for a new initiative to attract, retain and/or reengage reservists. This initiative will be developed and piloted in the next year.

Things to consider:

- What is your initiative?
- What might you name the initiative?
- What is the main goal of your initiative?
- How will your initiative be different to current or previous programs?
- Who is the target audience and why?
- How do you think your target audience will respond?

Social Media Campaign

As part of the work to raise awareness of your new initiative, your team is tasked with planning a social media campaign. They have given you creative freedom to come up with a concept that will engage the public and inform them of the upcoming changes to the ADF Reserves.

Things to consider:

- What platform/s will your social media campaign be on?
- What is the suggested name of the campaign?
- What might it look like?
- Who is the target audience and why?
- What information will you include?
- What is the benefit or outcomes you're expecting?

Recruitment and Attraction Event

In order to promote the new changes and support the recruitment efforts, your team has been tasked with organising a promotional event.

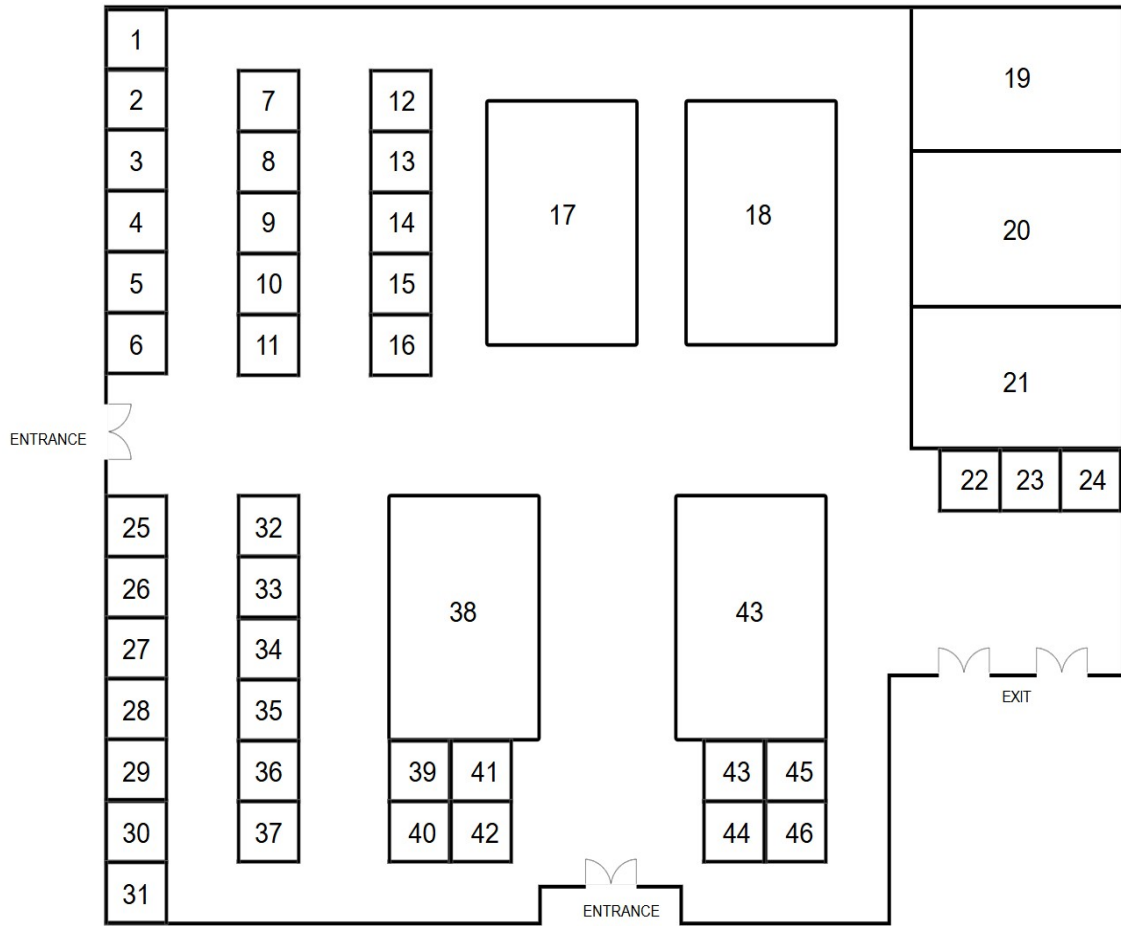
Several job-fair organisers have reached out to Defence, requesting participation in events. Defence have been provided with information, including venue layouts however the events are all taking place on the same day. You must review the options available to Defence and provide a recommendation on which promotional event is best suited to raise awareness and attract potential reservists.

Things to consider:

- Which option will you pick for the event?
- What is your reasoning for your choice?
- Who is the target audience and why?
- How will you attract attendees to come to your booth/session?
- What information will you provide at this event?
- What might be the potential risks of your choice?

Option A:

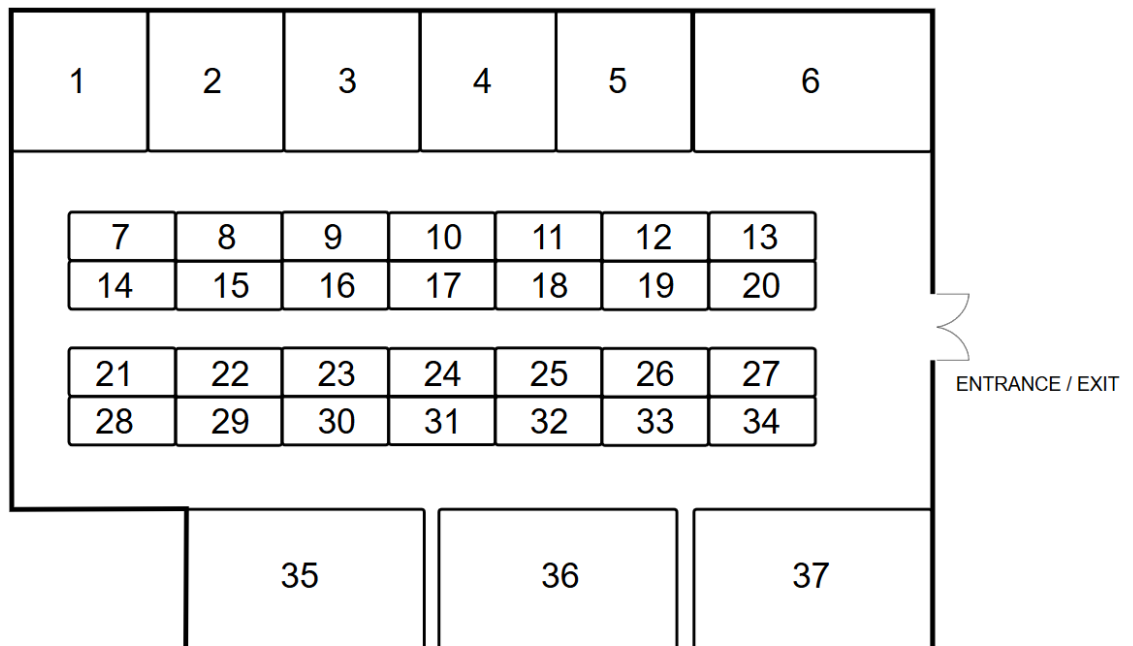
This job-fair is held at a big conference centre in a city centre. This venue is the biggest of the four options and the job-fair is a well-known career expo that runs every year, with a focus on engaging with students and recent graduates. Due to the high demand for stalls, you will only be able to secure one of the small stalls in the event, at this time only stalls 27-31 are still available.



Option B:

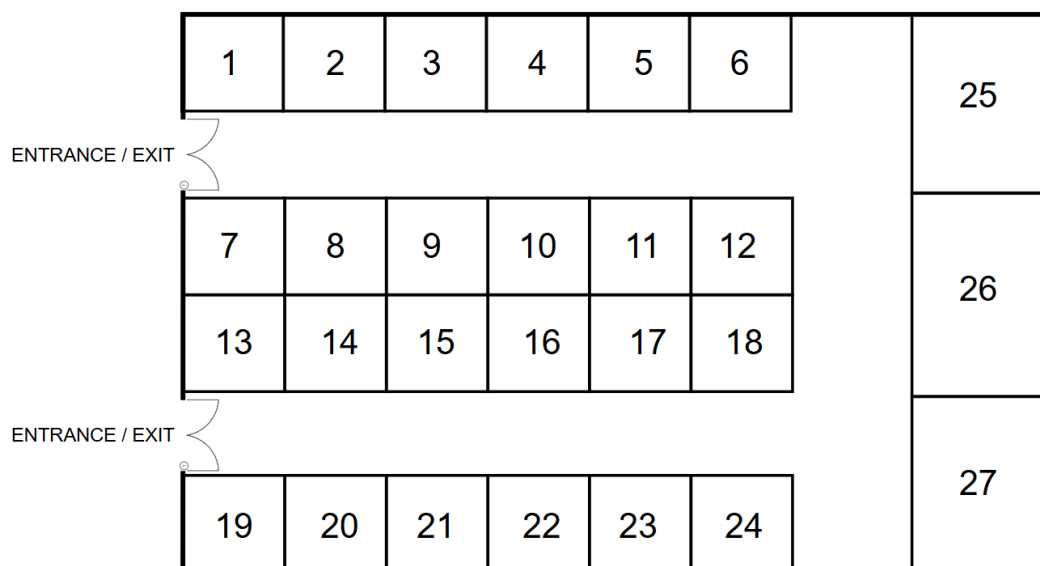
This job-fair is held in one of the inner suburbs near a capital city. The venue is medium sized, and this is the first time the event is being run. However, the organisers have done a lot of promotions and offered prize draws for attendants to increase visibility of the event. As it is a new

event, they have offered to set aside a bigger stall (36) for Defence.



Option C:

This job-fair is held in one of the suburbs. The venue is medium sized, and this will be the fifth consecutive year this event has run. The event is starting to make a name for itself as it offers services such as resume writing and career advice. While they have the least number of stalls, they have offered Defence the biggest and centre stall (26).



Option D:

This event is held online through a video conference platform. The event has run for a few years and is slowly growing in size. The event is advertised across Australia and allows presentations to be recorded and uploaded on their platform, which can be viewed and shared over the next six (6) months. **New Initiative**

In line with your secondary goal, your team is tasked with developing an idea for a new initiative to attract, retain and/or reengage reservists. This initiative will be developed and piloted in the next year.

Things to consider:

- What is your initiative?
- What might you name the initiative?
- What is the main goal of your initiative?
- How will your initiative be different to current or previous programs?

Presentation

As outlined above, at the end of your group activity, you will need to plan and present your ideas to the assessment panel. While it is not a mandatory requirement, you can use visual aids (e.g. mock-ups) to help you present your ideas if your group has chosen to do so.

You will have **15 minutes** in total to present uninterrupted. During this time, the assessors will not answer or ask any questions.

After you have finished the presentation, the assessors may choose to ask questions for up to five **(5) minutes**, if there is anything they wish to clarify.

Please note that the assessors on your panel may be from various backgrounds, so you are encouraged to present clearly and in a way that is easy to understand without specialist knowledge.

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